

Merfield Urban District Council.

Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year
1898.

To the Mirfield Urban District Council.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1898.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour again to present you with my Annual Report. While it is my duty from time to time to make suggestions which may add to the healthiness of the District, I shall always contrive not to put the Council to any needless or unnecessary expense, and trust I shall continue to have the same support in the future as has been so generously bestowed in the past.

Population

I am estimating the population to the end of June, 1898, at 12,239; an increase of 129.

Births

During the year 314 births have been registered (males 167, females 147). The birthrate for the year is at the rate of 25.6. The birthrate for England & Wales is 29.4. Although a slightly lower birthrate than 1897, still the births are 38 above the average of the last 10 years, as seen by the list below.

In 1889	...	...	...	270	In 1894	...	...	...	256
" 1890	...	...	...	270	" 1895	...	...	...	262
" 1891	...	...	...	261	" 1896	...	...	...	239
" 1892	...	...	...	263	" 1897	...	...	...	317
" 1893	...	...	...	308	" 1898	...	...	...	314

Deaths

During the year 218 deaths have been registered as having taken place in Mirfield. 2 of these were non-residents, 1 belonging to Liversedge died at the Crossley Hospital, the other was a Ravensthorpe man killed at Dark Lane. There have been 3 deaths of Mirfield residents occurring at the Asylum at Wakefield. I have not received any notice of deaths of Mirfield inhabitants occurring in the Union Workhouse. Of these deaths 110 were males, 108 females. The death-rate for the year is at the rate of 17.8, and 6 above the average of the last 10 years. The death-rate for England & Wales for the same period is 17.6.

Tabulated list of deaths as required by the Local Government Board. I also add the number for the nine preceding years so that you may see how this year compares with the previous ones:

	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	T'tls
Under 1 year	49	42	42	66	43	41	38	44	39	42	446
1 year and under 5 years	44	32	39	15	20	24	26	39	23	15	277
5 years	18	8	15	7	13	10	11	17	5	12	116
15 "	9	17	13	15	15	21	8	18	5	12	133
25 "	48	51	78	49	64	61	72	61	52	82	618
65 " and upwards	59	67	72	64	47	38	45	50	42	55	539
Totals	227	217	259	216	202	195	200	229	166	218	2129

Infants

The deaths of 42 infants, although more than 1897, is still 2 below the average of the last 10 years. The infant mortality was highest in the months of March, April, September, and December; the heaviest mortality was in September. Diarrhoea was then very prevalent, the deaths numbering 12, while in March and April there were 6 each, and in December, 7, e.g. - Jan. 1,

Feb.—1, March—6, April—6, May—2, June—nil, July—2, August—2, Sept.—12, Oct.—2, Nov.—1, Dec.—7. The infant deathrate is at the rate of 3.43 per 1000 deaths, and 133.7 per 1000 births registered, and for England and Wales 161 per 1000 births registered.

Phthisis

This disease has been the cause of 18 deaths. Although more than the preceding 2 years, this is still 2 below the average of the last 9 years.

In 1890	...	25 deaths	In 1893	...	20 deaths	In 1896	...	14 deaths
" 1891	..	15 "	" 1894	...	27 "	" 1897	...	11 "
" 1892	...	16 "	" 1895	...	19 "	" 1898	...	18 "

I am glad to see that at last public opinion is becoming aroused to the fact that Phthisis and all other Tubercular diseases are preventable. I hope the day is not far distant when the Council will see their way to provide Mirfield with a Steam Disinfector; for then it can be used not only for the disinfecting of clothes and bedding of Phthisical patients, but also those belonging to Fever patients. I think our present mode of disinfection is not altogether a success.

I should also ask the Council to be very watchful over the erection of new buildings, to prevent as far as possible the blocking out of sunlight to any houses already erected, also to urge upon persons building cottages the necessity of plenty of air in the houses, as there appears to me a growing tendency at the present day, to make the rooms in cottage houses too small, more especially the bedrooms.

Pneumonia, Pleurisy, & Bronchitis.

These diseases of the Respiratory system, which are more or less Acute diseases, have been the cause of 39 deaths, 11 being children under 5 years of age—in 1897 there were 15 under 5 years old that succumbed to one or other of these diseases. You will perhaps have a better idea of the mortality caused by these diseases from the following table, which makes one hope that as the death roll since 1893 is smaller, the improvement is permanent and not merely temporary.

In 1890...	...	...	45 out of 217 deaths or	1 in 4.7.
" 1891 (<i>Influenza year</i>)	79	" 259	"	1 in 3.2.
" 1892...	...	56	" 216	" 1 in 3.8.
" 1893...	...	52	" 202	" 1 in 3.6.
" 1894 ..	...	43	" 195	" 1 in 4.5.
" 1895...	...	44	" 200	" 1 in 4.5.
" 1896...	...	34	" 229	" 1 in 6.7.
" 1897...	...	34	" 166	" 1 in 4.8.
" 1898...	...	39	" 218	" 1 in 5.5.

Deaths not certified.

There has been only one death not certified.

Inquests

There have been 12 Inquests held during the year, as against 15 in 1897. 6 of these have not been what might be exactly termed deaths by violence, e.g.—they have been found dead; the remaining 6 have been by violence, 2 by drowning, and the other 4 have been killed when following their occupation.

Zymotic

The deaths due to the Zymotic class are 19, being 7 below the average of the last 10 years. You will see from the tables following the number of deaths occurring in the several diseases of this class.

	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	T'tl.
Smallpox ...	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Scarlet Fever ...	7	0	2	1	3	0	1	13	2	2	31
Measles ...	22	0	11	0	0	0	10	15	0	2	60
Typhoid Fever ..	3	2	4	0	2	0	0	2	1	2	16
Continued " ...	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	7
Diarrhœa ...	2	0	2	3	7	4	4	2	8	9	41
Diphtheria ...	3	5	6	0	0	3	2	4	2	0	25
Membranous Croup .	1	6	2	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	14
Erysipelas ...	2	1	3	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	10
Pyæmia ...	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Puerperal Fever ...	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	6
Whooping Cough ..	12	5	3	5	4	6	0	8	7	2	52
Total	53	19	37	17	17	16	18	47	22	19	265

Smallpox

There have been no cases during the year. There will be a very heavy bill to pay some day in consequence of the wholesale neglect of vaccination, which is still going on. When Smallpox appears in any locality the immediate rush for vaccination helps to minimise the risk along with the isolation which is so promptly taken.

Scarlet Fever

There have been 75 cases during the year, 19 being children under 5 years of age, and 55 over 5. The cases occurred in all the months, February having the most—January 1, February 17, March 5, April 4, May 5, June 5, July 2, August 4, September 7, October 9, November 5, December 10, and they appeared in the following districts, viz: East-thorpe 5, Upper Hopton 13, Battyeford—Snakehill 1, Nab Lane 2, Elbow 4; Towngate 7, Lee Green & Dunbottle 6, Northorpe 3, Nickhouse 8, Lower Hopton 4, Lowlands 3, New Scarbro' 4, Crossley 3, Old Bank Road 1, Knowl 1, Lady Wood 2.

Diphtheria

8 cases and no death.

Croup

1 case and 1 death.

Typhoid & Continued Fevers.

6 cases and 1 death. This Fever has never shewn any sign of becoming epidemic.

Erysipelas

15 cases and no death. 14 of these were over 5 years of age.

Measles

2 deaths.

Whooping Cough

This disease has not been prevalent to any extent during the year. The 2 deaths were children under 5 years of age, 1 a child 2 years of age, the other 13 months. 1 occurred in January and the other in June. This is 5 below the average of the last 10 years. This disease is scarcely ever absent for any length of time.

Drainage

I hope the Council will not be long before they commence the Upper Hopton Drainage; as I have mentioned before, that district is in urgent need of it. I have been given to understand the delay has been caused by the Local Government Board refusing their consent to the Council's borrowing powers; but I hope they have given their consent at last; it is very urgent, as the Farms are so inadequately drained.

Water

The Water supplied to the Township during the year has been abundant in quantity. There are also very much fewer cases of lead poisoning.

Infectious Diseases Notification Act.

During the year 106 cases have been notified as against 95 in 1897. The following table will shew you the number of cases notified and the deaths in each year since the adoption of the act in 1890 :—

	1890		1891		1892		1893		1894		1895		1896		1897		1898	
	Cases	Deaths	Cases	Deaths	Cases	Deaths	Cases	Deaths	Cases	Deaths	Cases	Deaths	Cases	Deaths	Cases	Deaths	Cases	Deaths
Smallpox ...	0	0	0	0	11	1	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scarlet Fever ...	10	0	41	2	23	1	39	3	13	0	32	1	339	13	66	2	75	2
Diphtheria ...	8	4	16	6	5	0	0	0	6	3	8	2	26	4	10	2	8	0
Membranous Croup ...	6	5	3	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	4	1	2	0	1	1
Typhoid Fever ...	13	4	4	4	2	0	3	2	3	0	17	0	14	2	5	1	6	2
Continued Fever ...	0	0	3	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Puerperal Fever ...	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	3	2	1	1
Erysipelas ...	4	1	11	3	16	3	4	0	10	0	9	0	10	0	9	0	15	0
Cholera ...	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total ...	41	14	79	20	60	7	55	6	34	5	68	4	394	22	95	7	106	6

I should like you to notice the diminishing number of deaths in proportion to the cases notified.

In 1890—	14	deaths in	41	cases, or	1	death in	2.95
" 1891—	20	"	79	"	1	"	3.95
" 1892—	7	"	60	"	1	"	8.57
" 1893—	6	"	55	"	1	"	9.16
" 1894—	5	"	34	"	1	"	6.98
" 1895—	4	"	68	"	1	"	17.0
" 1896—	22	"	394	"	1	"	17.90
" 1897—	7	"	95	"	1	"	13.4
" 1898—	6	"	106	"	1	"	17

What is this due to? Is it that the diseases have been less virulent, or to the greater use of disinfectants since Notification has been adopted? I think the latter. Of course some epidemics take on a more virulent type than others.

CROSSLEY HOSPITAL.

68 cases of Scarlet Fever have been treated at this Hospital during the year.

There is wanted a Convalescent Room where the patients might be for a week or so before they return home. There should also be a Private Ward. The place is really too small; I think it would be cheaper to go in for a permanent and larger building where more than one Fever can

be treated. As I have said on a previous occasion to the Council, this Hospital is doing a very good work, but if larger, its scope of usefulness would be greatly increased.

I wish before closing to thank your Sanitary Inspector for the very willing and able help he has always given me. I have been obliged to put him to a great deal of trouble at times, especially with the removal of Fever cases and disinfection, but he has always readily responded to my wishes.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

THOS. B. FAIRCLOUGH.

May 3, 1899.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

